

**PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING – FEBRUARY 10, 2009**

Testimony in Support of:

SB 849 – AAC Concerning Municipal Enforcement of Occupational Licensure Laws

**Presented by: Joyce Wojtas, Mechanical Contractors Association of Connecticut
And UA Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 777**

Senate Bill 849 is a much needed enforcement arm for compliance with the occupational licensure laws in Chapter 393 of the C.G.S. and an enhancement for enforcement of the State Building Code. Not only will increased enforcement protect the consumer, it will protect the safety of all citizens of the state.

To adequately enforce the State Building Code and the Plumbing, Electrical, Mechanical and Fire Safety Codes it incorporates, it is necessary to have qualified, licensed individuals performing this work, who have been properly trained under these codes for four to five years.

The Building Official is the “first responder” on most construction projects. Even though a license is required to obtain an electrical, plumbing, fire sprinkler, sheet metal, etc. permit, often, the people actually performing the work are not licensed or are not appropriately registered as an apprentice.

In hard economic times, this type of illegal activity increases because the person who cheats with unlicensed people performing this safety-sensitive work is usually cheating on other laws involving a business, i.e., workers’ compensation, unemployment compensation, liability insurance, wage and hour laws, etc. This helps the illegal operator low ball the price for this work and ultimately get the job!

There are around 35,000 licensed contractors and journeymen in the construction trades that abide by the law, pay their annual license fees and operate as legitimate tax-paying individuals.

This bill will have a positive fiscal impact for both the municipality and the state because more violations are expected to be reported and fines for violations are \$1,000 – first offense, \$1,500 – second offense and \$3,000 – third offense within 3 years.

Although this bill does not mandate that the Building Official report violations to the Consumer Protection Commissioner, we are hopeful that the persons responsible for code enforcement will recognize the importance of such action. As funds from building permits diminish, this bill offers a way to get the funding necessary to continue training programs for municipal building officials and enforcement activity without placing the burden on the town’s general fund.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

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